

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 ACDA-05 SCS-03 SCA-01 CU-02 /074 W

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R 080935Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6855

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7468

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: CHURCH OPPOSITION CONTINUES TO SPREAD

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN RECENT WEEKS CHURCH LEADERS APPEAR TO HAVE DEVELOPED MORE COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY. FOR TIME BEING GOVERNMENT IS LIMITING ITS RESPONSE TO INTENSIFIED HARASSMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. WELL ATTENDED CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT PROTEST PRAYER MEETINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL RELIGIOUS SERVICES WITH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MESSAGES HAVE NOT ONLY CONTINUED BUT HAVE INCREASINGLY SPREAD FROM SEOUL INTO MAJOR PROVINCIAL CITIES. BESIDES BROADENING THEIR EFFORTS BOTH CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS ARE INCREASINGLY HOLDING SERVICES FOR SPECIAL TARGET GROUPS OF STUDENTS, HOUSEWIVES, WORKERS, FAMILIES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND OTHERS. IN ADDITION, SERVICES AS WELL AS THE STATEMENTS ISSUED BY BOTH CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT GROUPS ARE NOW ASSUMING A MORE UNDISGUISED POLITICAL PROPAGANDA CHARACTER IN EFFORT TO CIRCUMVENT NEWS CENSORSHIP. IMPLICITLY CHURCH LEADERS HOPE THAT CHURCH INSPIRED POLITICAL PROTESTS

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WILL SPARK POLITICAL ACTION OR ALTERNATELY

INDUCE PRESIDENT PARK TO LIBERALIZE HIS POLICIES.  
SOME HAVE INDICATED THAT IF NDP TAKES ANTI-YUSHIN  
PROTEST TO PEOPLE AS IT HAS ANNOUNCED, CHURCH AND NDP  
CAMPAIGNS MAY SEEK TO REINFORCE EACH OTHER.

2. ON BASIS OF APPARENT TACIT UNDERSTANDING WITH  
KCIA, CHURCH PROTEST LEADERS BELIEVE NEW STRATEGY  
CAN BE CONDUCTED WITHIN ESTABLISHED CMNFINES OF  
CHURCH SERVICES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNAL AND SOCIAL  
MOVEMENTS WITHOUT RISKING CONFRONTATION WITH POLICE  
OR SECURITY FORCES IN STREET, LARGE SCALE ARRESTS  
OR OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE WHICH COULD BE BLAMED ON  
CHRISTIAN ACTIVISTS. NEW TACTICS ARE ALSO INTENDED  
TO MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR ROKG TO PRESCRIBE  
TIGHTER LIMITS FOR RELIGIOUS PROTEST ACTIVITIES  
WITHOUT FURTHER ENCROACHING ON OTHER SENSITIVE FREEDOM  
OF RELIGION ISSUES.

3. SENSE OF GRIEVANCES OF CATHOLIC AND MAINSTREAM  
PROTESTANT LEADERS APPEARS NOW STRONGER AND MORE  
DETERMINED THAN YEAR EARLIER IN ABSENCE OF ROKG  
RESPONSIVENESS ON PRISONER AND OTHER POLITICAL ISSUES.  
HOWEVER, CHURCH LEADERSHIP APPEARS MORE CAUTIOUS,  
AVOIDING COORDINATION WITH OTHER CHURCH GROUPS OR  
SECULAR OPPOSITION LEADERS, AND SEEKING TO AVOID  
OUTRIGHT PROVOCATIONS OF AUTHORITIES. THIS IS MAIN  
REASON WHY CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS HAVE SO FAR  
AVOIDED FORMAL COMMON ACTION AT TOP. HOWEVER, AT  
PARISH LEVELS AND THROUGH INTERDENOMINATIONAL SOCIAL  
ACTION GROUPS, YMCA AND YWCA BRANCHES, ETC.,  
COOPERATION NOW REPORTEDLY QUITE STRONG.

4. CHRISTIAN LEADERS CLAIM THAT GROWING INTENSITY OF  
CHURCH STATEMENTS REFLECTS WIDESPREAD SENTIMENT  
AMONG THE KOREAN PEOPLE WHOM THEY SEEK TO POLITICIZE.  
EVIDENCE OF INTENSITY OF CHURCH FEELINGS ARE  
OCTOBER 18 CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE STATEMENT  
ENDORING RIGHTS OF CHRISTIANS TO OPPOSE "UNJUST  
AUTHORITY" AND SUPPORTING BISHOP CHI'S ACTIONS;  
RECENT SHARPLY ANTI-ROKG STATEMENT BY PRESBYTERIAN  
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CHURCH OF ROKG; AND CATHOLIC WARNING ON NOVEMBER 6  
THAT ROKG SHOULD NOT EXPLOIT PRESIDENT FORD'S  
VISIT AS STAMP OF APPROVAL FOR ITS DOMESTIC POLICIES.

5. EVEN GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE METHODIST CHURCH,  
WHICH HAD HITHERTO ABSTAINED PASSIVELY FROM ANTI-  
ROKG PROTESTS, HAS NOW BECOME SO DIVIDED BY MORE  
LIBERAL ELEMENTS THAT IT WAS UNABLE TO ELECT NEW

BISHOP AND HAD TO ADJOURN ITS QUADRI-ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OCTOBER 23-27. MAIN ISSUES REPORTEDLY WERE RELATIONS WITH ROKG AND NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, AND DETERMINATION OF YOUNGER MINISTERS THAT METHODIST CHURCH PLAY OUTRIGHT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTION ROLE.

6. ACCORDING TO CATHOLIC SOURCES, BOTH PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC CHURCH GROUPS ARE PLANNING TO DRAMATIZE THEIR OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT PARK AND YUSHIN ORDER BY CONDUCTING SPECIAL PROTEST CHURCH SERVICES ALL OVER KOREA ON NOVEMBER 22, DAY OF PRESIDENT FORD'S ARRIVAL. HOWEVER, CHURCH PROTESTERS REPORTEDLY WILL AVOID DEMONSTRATIONS OR LARGE SCALE PROTEST SERVICES IN SEOUL SO AS NOT TO EMBARRASS VISITOR.

7. CONSISTENT WITH ITS RECENT ACTIONS VIS-A-VIS OTHER ANTI-GOVERNMENT GROUPS, E.G. STUDENTS, JOURNALISTS, AND UNION LEADERS, ROKG HAS BEEN REACTING AT LEAST OUTWARDLY WITH RESTRAINT AGAINST CHURCH PROTESTS AS LONG AS THEY DO NOT SPILL OVER INTO STREET DEMONSTRATIONS. HOWEVER, KCIA AND CID REPORTEDLY USE FREQUENT VISITS TO CHURCH LEADERS, INTERROGATIONS OF ACTIVISTS, AND LATELY DETAILED AND INTENSIVE FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS OF CHURCH GROUPS AS MEANS OF KEEPING THE LID ON CHURCHES. LATEST SUCH INVESTIGATIONS HAVE HIT NCCC-K GENERAL SECRETARY KIM KWAN SUK AND LEADERS OF CATHOLIC YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS' MOVEMENT.

8. FOREIGN MISSIONARIES, AND ESPECIALLY AMERICANS HAVE BEEN WARNED TO ABSTAIN FROM PROTEST ACTIVITIES. SOME ARE ISSUED SPECIAL RESIDENCE PERMIT RENEWALS  
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OF ONLY 1-3 MONTHS DURATION AND OTHERS REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THEY CANNOT CONTINUE THEIR TEACHING FUNCTIONS UNTIL THEIR RESIDENCE STATUS HAS BEEN CLARIFIED. AS A RESULT FOREIGN MISSIONARIES WHO WERE UNTIL RECENTLY AMONG LEADING ACTIVISTS OF CHURCH PROTESTS HAVE CLEARLY TAKEN BACK SEATS AND PRINCIPAL INITIATIVE NOW COMES FROM KOREAN CLERGY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE AMONG CATHOLICS.  
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